

Jeffrey Brett

# The Lost Bridegroom, and Reunion with Him

The Song of Solomon 5:2 - 7:9

---

## Love gone cold

In chapter five of this beautiful Old Testament book we come to the second time that the spouse is separated from her true lover, but this time, sadly her love has become cold and she has settled down in comfort without him. She then has to go through very painful experiences, set on by his expression of love to her, before she is recovered. During these experiences, the true state of her heart is brought out by the way she speaks about him to others, and when we come to chapter 6 we find the spouse and her lover both together again. Looking at chapters like this helps us to see pictures of experiences we may go through in our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, the true lover of our souls. We see how He reacts to our coldness and what He does to draw us back to Himself.

Verses 2 and 3 describe the sad state that she has got into, "I sleep, but my heart is awake; it is the voice of my beloved! He knocks, saying, Open for me, my sister, my love, my dove, my perfect one; for my head is covered with dew, my locks with the drops of the night. I have taken off my robe; how can I put it on again? I have washed my feet; how can I defile them?" She has taken her ease in circumstances where there was no room for him and she had made herself comfortable there. She has gone to sleep after having taken off her robe and shoes, but she was woken up

by the sound of his voice reminding her of what she was to him and how deeply he loved her. But sadly, she seems indifferent to his call. She almost seems to accuse him of unreasonableness in expecting her to get up and dress and to open the door to him.

If we are honest, I think we will recognize a picture here of what happens to us sometimes in our relationship with the Lord Jesus. Many times we may get into places where the Lord Jesus would not go, and we are quite happy to be there. Just like Peter when he went into Pilate's judgment hall and sat and warmed himself at the fire (Mark 14:54). We very easily become more concerned with our own comfort and ease than His love and desire for us. Peter was brought to his senses by the Lord's look; here she is roused by the sound of her lover's voice.

### Strangers in the world

He was the first to become aware of her coldness, and immediately he acts towards recovery; he called to her. Let us be assured that when our hearts become cold towards the Lord Jesus that He is the first to become aware of it, but so great is His love to us that He will not rest until He has recovered us to Himself.

In our chapter the bridegroom has spent the night outside in the cold and wet, while she was taking her rest. Do we sufficiently realize that the Lord Jesus has been cast out by the world? When He was here, He had nowhere to rest His head. It is still the same today. We may get along quite happily in the world, but that is only because we are not in His company. If we always lived consciously in the enjoyment of His love, we would find that we are strangers in this world with all its pleasures and sin, and cannot rest there and be at ease.

### A reminder of His love

He not only called her but put his hand through the hole in the door. Verse 4 says, "My beloved put his hand by the latch of the door, and my heart yearned for him." The sight of his hand made her get up and open the door; but when she got there, he had gone but had left behind a vivid reminder of his love. "I rose up to open for my beloved, and my hands dripped with myrrh, my fingers with liquid myrrh, on the handles of the lock."

The only way that our often-cold hearts can be moved towards the Lord Jesus is to be reminded of all that His love cost Him in suffering on the cross. If we could see

His blessed hands, we would see also the print of the nails. If we reached out to Him, we would be reminded of the sweetness of His unchanging love that took Him into death for us. The Lord Jesus was perfectly aware of the tendency of our hearts to forget Him, when He instituted the Lord's Supper. This is the occasion when we can, every week, remember Him in His death. If you do not do this, do not be surprised if your heart becomes indifferent to the claims of Christ and you find yourself at ease in places where He would not come.

The Lord Jesus wants us to realize how much He feels our lack of love to Him, and so it is necessary sometimes for us to be put into circumstances where the awfulness of life without Him comes home to us. So He withdraws Himself and leaves the Holy Spirit to work in our hearts. We read in verse 6, "I opened for my beloved, but my beloved had turned away and was gone. My heart went out to him when he spoke. I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer." He would have us experience what unrequited love feels like. Sometimes the only way that we learn is by passing through circumstances in which we may drop so low as to wonder if the Lord Jesus is with us. We know that He has said, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you" (Heb. 13:5). This is always true, but when my heart becomes cold towards Him, I will lose the sense of His presence. She speaks with anguish now, for she had felt what it is like to call to him and have no answer. Have you ever done that? Got really low in spirit, prayed hard but it seemed as though He was not listening? Look deeply into your own heart and see if He is everything to you and that you may have, for a while, lived as if He did not exist. We must learn what that feels like.

In these circumstances everything seems to be against us. In verse 7 she tries to find him. She is accosted by well meaning folk who misjudge her intentions. "The watchmen who went about the city found me. They struck me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took my veil away from me." The watchmen and the keepers of the walls would represent persons who have a responsibility to care for souls. They can only go by what they see. They cannot look into our hearts, so sometimes they may make mistakes. These people took the spouse for a woman of the city, finding her abroad at night. So they treated her as one. They thought her wearing a veil was a mockery and took it away from her. That veil meant that she was an espoused woman, but here she was wandering about the city alone at night.

How she would have felt this! How ashamed she would have been! She was beginning to realize the consequences of her coldness to her lover. What a picture this is! Think again of dear Simon Peter. What a moment it was when the awfulness of what he had done was realized by him! What anguish and sorrow of heart was his as he went out and wept bitterly for those three days!

## A heart full for the Bridegroom

But the spouse met others that dark night who did not abuse her. She almost seems to assume that they knew where he was. She speaks to them words that she would have loved to have said to him herself, but she had lost him. "I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, that you tell him I am lovesick!" What a change was taking place in her heart! So different from the beginning of the chapter where she had forgotten him! Now her heart was full for him, but she had lost him. How true it is that sometimes we do not realize the value of a thing until we lose it. So they ask her a question in verse 9, "What is your beloved more than another beloved, O fairest among women? What is your beloved more than another beloved, that you so charge us?"

Whoever these people represent, they are those who obviously know something about the Lord Jesus, but count Him no more important than other people in their lives. So they do not understand her feelings. Sadly, when we pass through chastisement at the Lord's hand, we may find even other Christians do not understand what we are passing through. Perhaps they have never had such experiences. But this draws out from her heart the most beautiful description of her lover. In pictorial language, it is probably the most beautiful description of the Lord Jesus that we have in the Old Testament. Only one who knows Him well can speak like this.

She first speaks of his being white and ruddy and then of his worthiness to be lifted up above every other rival. We read in verse 10, "My beloved is white and ruddy, chief among ten thousand." His whiteness reminds us that the Lord Jesus is the only One who can be described as the Holy One of God. The Apostle Peter tells us, "He did no sin" (1 Pet. 2:22). He could ask the crowd, "Which of you convicts Me of sin?" (John 8:46). The sinless perfection of His manhood is essential. But He is also ruddy. This would remind us of His devotion to God and the energy that always characterized His service. His being "chief among ten thousand" carries the idea of 'being lifted up as a banner'. He is the one who is surrounded by those who love Him and gladly give to Him the honor that He is worthy of.

"His head is like the finest gold; his locks are wavy, and black as a raven." The Lord Jesus as a divine person is not only fully acquainted with the mind of God, but able to give effect to all that was in the Father's heart from eternity. There is no ageing in Him. He will always be what He is; there will never be any evidence of age in Him.

She likens his eyes to those of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk and fitly set. We are told that the eyes are the most expressive feature of our faces.

How true this is of the Lord Jesus. How His eyes saw every need of those around Him and often shed tears of compassion and understanding. Yet being fitly set would suggest that their estimation was always in accord with the mind of God.

"His cheeks are like a bed of spices, like banks of scented herbs. His lips are lilies, dripping liquid myrrh." The number of scriptures that mention smiting on the cheek (1 Ki. 22:24; 2 Chr. 18:23; Job 16:10; Ps. 3:7; Lam. 3:30; Mic. 5:1; Matt. 5:39; Luke 6:29), would seem to suggest that His cheeks speak of the lowly grace of His that led Him to bear all the smiting and insults that were heaped upon Him. In those circumstances, His lips uttered no word of anger or reproof. Think of the pain as those terrible men in the judgment hall ripped His beard from His face and yet He never said a word! Peter tells us in his first epistle: "Who committed no sin, nor was guile found in His mouth; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Pet. 2:22-24).

In her description of him, the spouse in referring to his head, his hands and his feet speaks of *gold*. This would again remind us of the divine glory of His person though seen in a man. His head can completely take in every divine thought. His hands are strong enough to carry out everything for God's pleasure, and nothing can ever move what is established by His feet. But in describing his belly or bowels, it being the same word, she refers to ivory and sapphires. "His body is carved ivory inlaid with sapphires." The bowels in the Scriptures always speak of the depth of inward feeling, both of the Savior and the saints. Frequently we read of the Lord Jesus being "moved with compassion" when He saw the distress all around Him. How He felt deeply within Himself not only what the sufferer was passing through, but more than this, He expressed what the heart of God was feeling. We, as Christians, have to learn this if we are going to be effective in sympathizing with others.

The spouse five times refers to *white* or things that are *white* in her description of him. His overall bearing being white, his eyes washed with milk, his lips like lilies, his belly like ivory and his legs like marble. Every feature of Christ is pure. No taint of sin mars anything about Him. He is completely suitable to God. The growing of ivory is the cause of great pain to the animal. The compassions of Jesus were the cause of great sorrow to Him and led to the acute suffering of death on the cross. He is called the "Man of Sorrows" (Isa. 53:3). But the blue of the sapphire would remind us that His feelings were not mere human sentiment, but were the feelings of heaven. His legs and his feet being like "pillars of marble, set on bases of fine gold" would again remind us not only of the righteousness and purity of wherever

He went or whatever He did, but that all was done on the basis of what was according to God's will.

At the end of verse 15, she seems to stand back and take an admiring view of his whole person, "His countenance is like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars." The cedar is a very stately tree and stands out amongst the trees for this. How the Lord Jesus stands out from all others. There is none to compare with the excellence of His Person. But her description is not complete without her mentioning his mouth. This seems to suggest that she had known intimacy with him. She had previously spoken about his kisses, and here, before she finished, she refers to the ultimate enjoyment she had experienced in their love together. "Yes, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem." There is no part of him that she does not admire, and she speaks of him as her beloved and friend. We do well to ask ourselves if we know anything at all about the Person and love of Christ to be able to speak about Him like this?

### Showing what Christ means to us

The beginning of chapter 6 shows us the effect that her description of her lover has upon others. "Where has your beloved gone, O fairest among women? Where has your beloved turned aside, that we may seek him with you?" These daughters of Jerusalem were so attracted to him that they wanted to find him as well. How true it is that the best way to attract others to Christ is to be able to show them that He means everything to us. If they can see that our hearts are full of His beauties and glories, then what we say about Him will be more effective.

### Looking in the right place

Then in the second verse she seems, without being told, to know where he is. "My beloved has gone to his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed his flock in the gardens, and to gather lilies." She had been looking for him in the wrong places; she had to learn that he would only be found in places that were suitable to him. This is often very true of us. We may go through very painful experiences if we think we can find Christ in places that are not according to His will.

She realizes that he will only be at rest in places of harmlessness and simplicity where there is nothing to reproach, and so she finds him. She speaks of how much she is to him and then of what he is to her. What a blessed moment it is when we yield completely to the Lord Jesus, realizing how precious we are to Him! So much

so that He not only gave everything for us, but Himself also. And then to have Him as our absorbing portion even now, as we will throughout eternity. She says, "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine. He feeds his flock among the lilies."

In the rest of this chapter he speaks of her beauty and attractiveness to him. They are together again in all the intimacy of undisturbed love and affection. She has passed through much painful exercise, but it has only produced in her features that are attractive to him. May we learn that often the dark parts of our lives are those that, through exercise and prayer, produce in us that which the Lord Jesus appreciates.

---

